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Taipei City Future Retirees' Opinions on Moving into Retirement Villages

Research Paper, English Composition III

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Have you ever thought about your ideal retired life and where you would like to live? With a huge group of future retirees in Taiwan, a potential market of retirement villages is expected. A report released by the Council for Economic Planning and Development stated that Taiwan will become an “aged” society by 2018 and a “hyper-aged” society which has over 20 percent of the population of 65 years old or above by 2025 (Taipei Times). Furthermore, Taiwan’s birth rate has fallen to the world’s lowest in 2011. The increasing number of elderly would potentially lead to a high demand for retirement villages in Taiwan. Facing the structural changes in population, Taipei residents are encouraged to begin to consider whether they should live with their children or move to retirement villages after they retire reaching the legal retirement age.

In order to take care of Taiwan’s aging population, it is essential for the government to provide good-standard residential facilities for the elderly after their retirement, especially when a large number of baby boomers (born in 1945 to 1965) are expected to reach their retirement age. However, many Taiwanese senior citizens tend to ignore the significance of making retirement plan beforehand. Consequently, it has become a serious social issue because it is quite common that some people force their retired parents to leave home or decide for their parents where to live the last minutes. Forcing to find a retirement accommodation under such urgent circumstance, a lot of people ended up living somewhere they don’t feel comfortable with for the rest of their lives.

Apparently, a retirement village is nothing new for those “super-aged” societies,

a term used to describe a society with more than 20% of elderly citizens in its where their elderly citizens have already reached over 20 percent of the entire population. Therefore, there are plenty of studies conducted by scholars in the Northern Europe, Western Europe, North America and Japan on the topics of retirement villages. Meanwhile, Taiwan, standing as the next hyper-aged (How is “hyper-aged” different from “super-aged” society?) in 2050 was reported ill-prepared to handle the consequences of a rapidly aging population coupled with an extremely low birth rate. However, there was no previous research that examined the opinion of Taipei City retiree-to-be on living in retirement villages. The study examined the views of people who are about to retire in five to seven years on moving into a retirement village. The study took into consideration their income, education levels and occupations. The findings explained how the elderly perceives the options of moving to a retirement village and what an ideal retirement village is like for them prospects to be achieved for retirement villages. (The underlined part is not quite clear. I rewrote it for you.)

Before probing into the ~~prospects~~ of the ideal retirement villages for Taipei residents, it is important to comprehend how Taiwanese society has transformed (Not clear and needs to be rephrased). In Rickards’ article “Cover Story: The Aging Taiwanese”, he gives an in-depth inspection into Taiwanese aging society from the perspectives of pro and cons. He says, “As the number of the elderly in the Taiwanese society rapidly increases, the economic consequences could be enormous” (Rickards). Taiwan is facing the rising number of the elder citizens, nose-diving birthrate and also the shrinking "working-age" population. According to the government's Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD), by 2026, one in every five Taiwanese adults is expected to be over 65, and by 2051 only 7.8% of the population will be aged 14 or under (Rickards). Meanwhile, this critical phenomenon would also bring significant impact on many aspects of the economy, which implying there will be a

huge demand for senior health care. Richards also stated that today the middle-aged generation, have changed their attitudes in that they are no longer expecting their children to take care of them when they get old. Because of the economic growth and industrial revolution, people who are in their 50s in Taiwan now **may (You can't be 100% sure)** have some savings to rely on themselves financially. It means that they **will may** be able to afford to live in a retirement village if they choose to do so. The related senior village industry is estimated to grow to be about NT\$350 billion (over US\$10 billion) in investment within the next seven years (**Cite your source here**).

The purpose of the research was to examine closely Taipei's future retirees' views on moving into retirement villages and their needs when they actually moved into one of them. The study incorporated an online survey and face-to-face interviews. Hence, the central research questions in the present study were:

Central question #1: What were participants' retirement plans?

Central question #2: According to their plan, did the participants want to move in to a retirement village?

(a): Why would they consider living in a retirement village?

(b): Why wouldn't they consider living in a retirement village?

What about one of the aspects you were supposed to examine, which is "what an ideal retirement village is like"? Based on your findings, it should be your third central questions.

The first question examined the Taipei citizens' retirement plans in term of **their** saving **circumstances** and future living styles. The second question investigated whether the future retirees would consider living in retirement villages and their reasons for their decisions.

The survey was conducted from May, 2015 to June, 2015 and was composed of

two parts: an online questionnaire and one-on-one interviews. The target respondents were Taipei residents, aged from 45 and above, who planned to retire within next seven years. The researcher adopted the stratified sampling method to collect balanced (what do you mean by “balanced” here?) data from the online questionnaire and finally received thirty valid responses from both male and female participants. (How many males and females respectively?) Likewise, the researcher randomly selected three female and two male respondents from the survey pool as the face-to-face interviewees to search for more in-depth responses.

The online questionnaire was composed of three parts: background information, their current retirement plans and lastly the anticipated retirement village facilities. In the first section, the respondents were required to fill out their basic information, such as gender, age, education level, occupation and individual monthly income. The second section focused on their financial arrangements in terms of personal savings and retirement pensions. Additionally, in this part, the respondents also answered their ideal retirement ages and preferred retirement living styles. Lastly, Section Three provided multiple scenario-based questions for those who were willing to move into a retirement village to offer their expected facilities or services when they finally moved in. The complete survey questionnaire is included in the appendix.

The interview was the extended version of questionnaire and the participants were encouraged to give more in-depth feedback through one-on-one interviews. Taking advantages of more open-ended questions in the interviews, the researcher was able to guide the participants to discuss their honest thoughts of retirement villages. Detailed responses were collected from the randomly selected five future retirees in the interviews.

The survey has successfully collected 30 valid questionnaires and feedback from three female and two male interviewees. The researcher analyzed the data and

specified the following findings.

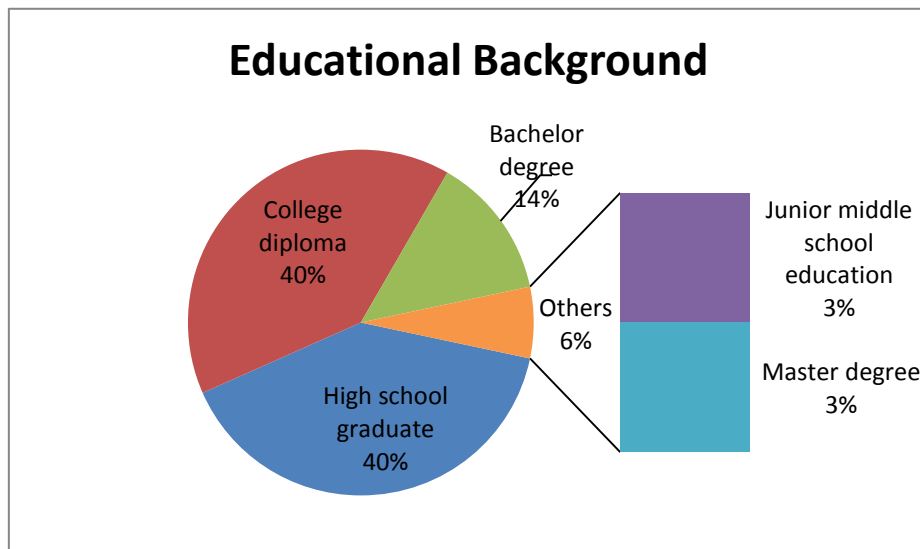


Fig. 1 Highest Academic Qualification

The background information received from Section One indicates that the majority of participants came from Taiwanese middle class. Their fine education degrees and monthly salaries are the best evidence. Fig.1 points out 40% respondents are high school graduates, the other 40% have university diplomas, 13.3% have master degrees and 3% have Ph.D.

In terms of occupation, most of the respondents in the study worked in service industry (30%) or trading business industry (23.3%) whereas none of them was engaging in agriculture, legal industry or public service. In fact, 60% of the participants received 50,000 NTD or above for monthly salary, surpassing Taiwan's average monthly income which was only around 36,000 NTD. Data from Section One also responded 73.3% participants are aged between 45 to 55 years old. Plus, 76.6 % of them were married with children. From the data above, the researcher surmised that questionnaire the respondents generally belonged to Taiwanese middle class families.

Furthermore, the respondents reported their retire plans in Section Two.

Q: Have you heard of "retirement villages"?

More 75% respondents answered “Yes” while 25 % had no idea about the term.

The first group that had some basic understandings of retirement villages reported that they did not adore the term of retirement village in Chinese, “養生村”. Here were their reasons:

- I don't like the term of retirement village. Retirement village (養生村) sounds too passive, implying the residents are awaiting their doom.
- I like the concept of retirement village. But I cannot image myself living with a whole bunch of old folks.

Surprisingly, 70% respondents reported that they didn't have a specific retirement plan but they all had an ideal retirement age. Figure 3 explains 13% wished to retire between 45 to 55 years old, 57% wanted to stop working between 55 to 65, and 30 % fell after 65.

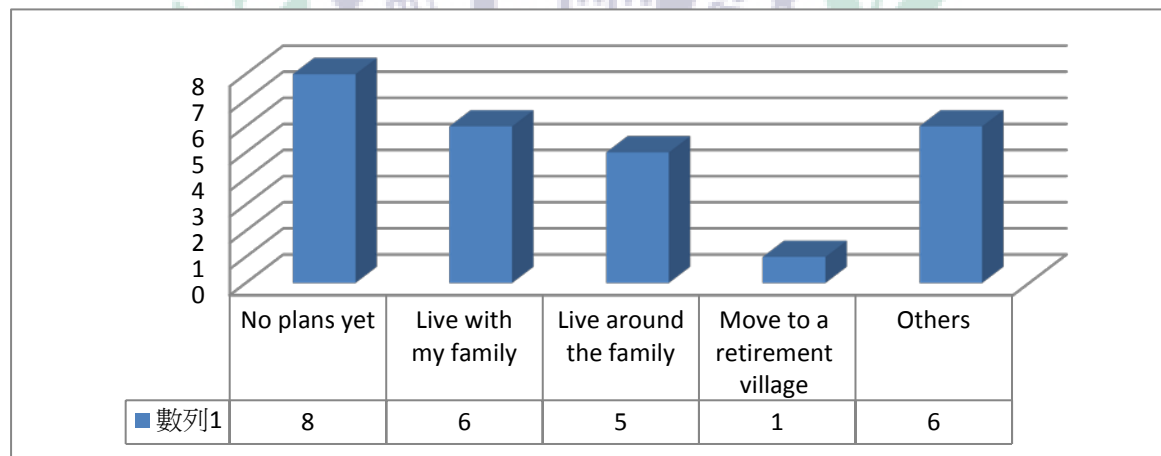


Fig. 2 Preferred retirement life style (Why doesn't the figures add up to 30, which is the total number of your respondents? I am confused.)

Later, respondents were required to tick the preferred retirement life styles. According to Fig. 2, eight respondents replied they had never thought of the question before. Six wanted to live with the family while five prefer to live in the neighborhood with their children. However, only one person took moving into a retirement village as the priority. The rest who chose “others” give some examples:

- I want move to countryside and build my own house.
- My family plan to immigrate to Canada.
- My wish is to travel around the world.

As a result, not every respondent had the strong desire to stay in Taipei. If they did, moving to retirement villages was definitely not their first choice.

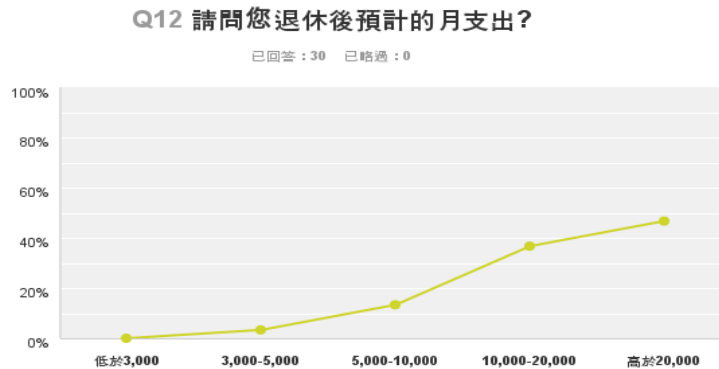


Fig. 3 How much will you withdraw from your pension monthly after retirement?

As a matter of fact, over 80 % of respondents have been saved part of their monthly salary for retirement lives. In addition, Fig. 3 demonstrates the respondents' precise retirement monthly budgets. Due to the financial differences, 3.33% would plan to spend 3,000 to 5,000 NTD, 13.33% could afford 5,000 to 10,000 NTD, 36.67% would spend 10,000 to 20,000 NTD and lastly, nearly half of them (46.67%) planned to spend more 20,000 NTD per month.

All in all, based on the answers from Section Two, the researcher found out that the majority of the respondents preferred “living near the family” whether in the same house or in the neighborhood. And half of them were still able to afford more 20,000 NTD for monthly expenses even if they stopped working.

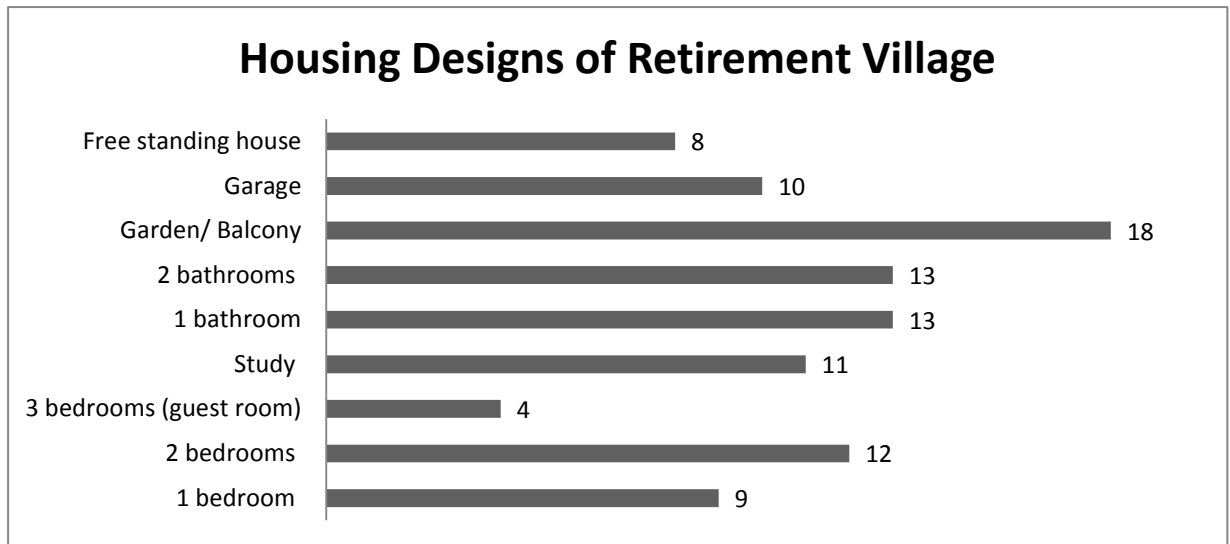


Fig.4 What housing design are you looking for in a retirement village?

(This part of the findings actually answers your third research question, which you did not state on Page 3.) Section Three discusses why people would consider moving to retirement villages and the anticipated facilities if the participants really moved in someday. Fig 4 indicates their ideal house designs based on the number of votes. Garden/Balcony (18 votes) was what the respondent desire the most while the third bedroom which could be used as a guestroom was considered to be the most unnecessary. As for the communal facilities, 83.33% respondents considered library is important while only 36.7 % thought massage service essential. The interviewee shared, “The most important thing is people would feel comfortable to interact with each other while using the facilities.” As a result, the researcher noticed more than 70% respondents voted for function room and library as the second best facilities.

What services would you like to have in a retirement village? (multi-selection)	votes	order ranking based on importance
1. Village bus	25	1
2. Emergency call button system	25	1
3. Home cleaning	23	2
4. Meals	21	3
5. Visiting Doctor/Therapists	16	4
6. Organized activities and outings	12	5

7. Visiting hairdresser	8	6
8. On-site Village Manager	6	7

Fig. 5 What services would you like to have in a retirement village?

In sum, there was no obvious gap between the top three choices for they were significant to create an elderly-friendly environment. On the opposite, only 6 respondents regarded on-site village manger important because the interviewee rather had more staff walking around the community to provide timely help.

Q. What are the critical reasons that make you decide not to live in a retirement village? (Mark down the scale degrees as numbers 1 to 5, 1 the most important, 5 the least)

- It is not necessary to move in a retirement village 2.96
- Far away from the family 3.27
- **Want to stay in the original house 2.65 (Why are this item and the one below bolded?)**
- **Feeling abandoned by the family 2.58**
- The payment of cost of the retirement village is unaffordable 3.58

Collected from both the interview and survey, there were further true thoughts from the ones who refused to move to retirement villages:

- I don't really understand how the retirement village works.
- I don't like to attend group activities or followed a fixed schedule.
- The life would be boring without acquaintances. I would take it into consideration if I have some of my old friends live there.
- I won't go there until I cannot take care of myself.
- Staying with my family should be the priority. I can hire foreign maid at my own house.

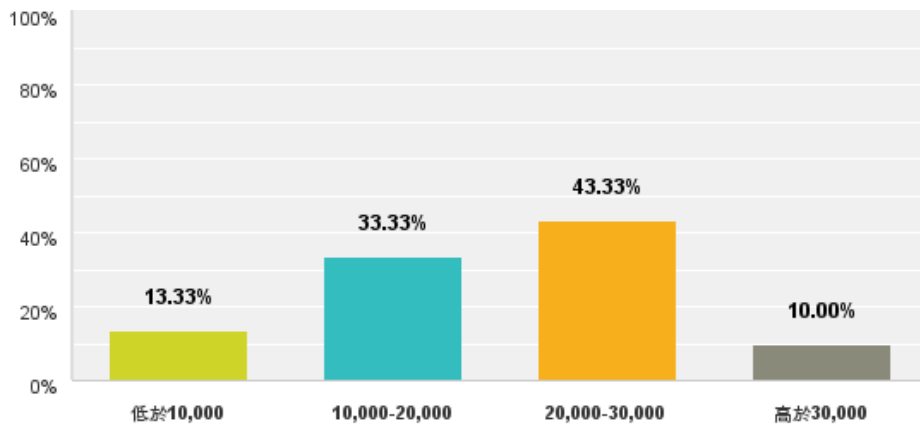


Fig. 6 How much do you think is the acceptable monthly fee for a retirement village?

The chart of Fig. 6 shows only 33.3% accepted 10,000 to 20,000 NTD, 43.33 % was okay with 20,000 to 30,000 NTD and only 10% would pay more than 30,000 NTD.

As a result, there is a SWOT analysis to summarize the strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats of retirement village as the conclusion.

(You should give the chart below a title.)

<p>Strength</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The retirement village's facilities met the potential clients' needs (Fig 5) 2. Professional aid was provided all time in the village. 	<p>Weakness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion was not successful for 75 % respondents have heard of the term, but some of them still "didn't understand how it works". 2. The fees were reported too expensive. Generally, retirement village costs around 25,000 NTD a month.
<p>Opportunity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taiwan will become an "aged" society by 2018 (Taipei Times). The structural change also brings availability of assisted living facilities. 2. While over 80% respondents have retirement saving and pension, 30% of them don't have a retirement plan. This 	<p>Threat</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hiring foreign maid could be an alternative for elderly people who wanted to stay "at their original homes" or "live near the family" (Fig. 2).

indicates a massive market for retirement village.	
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All in all, there are two main concerns for the respondents who were not willing to go to retirement villages. First, their lack of understanding of the accommodation has prevented them from moving into the village. They thought the term of retirement village “養生村” sounded too passive for elderly citizens. But in fact, the purpose of the village was not about “managing” a group of old folks together, but encouraging retirees to have fulfilled and happy lives in a safe environment. As a result, Taiwanese retirement villages should promote “living trial periods” through “various social medias” in order to make the potential client more acquainted with the retirement villages. Take the most famous retirement villages, Chang Gung Health and Culture Village for example; they provide rental rooms for potential clients to experience in life in retirement village at the price of NTD 1700 per day. However, the information was only showed on the website rather than other broadcasting platforms that are more accessible for elderly citizens, such as radio, TV commercial or printed advertisement.

Second, the monthly fee was too high to afford. Although the respondent gave positive feedback on the housing, public facility and services, the expense for the retirement village was unaffordable for most of the “middle-class” respondents (Fig.6). As Taiwan's senior citizens' market got more active every day, our government was encouraged to fund subvention, especially for elderly housing problem. If a retirement village was not the respondent’s precedence as Fig. 2 points out only one out of thirty chose it as his/ her first choice, Taiwan’s government should think about how to arrange elderly-friendly communities which allow Taipei’s future retirees to “live next to” their beloved ones for the family sentiments are irreplaceable

for 42% the respondents (Fig.2). (Based on your findings, do you think that more people in the future in Taiwan will choose to move to a retirement village? Why or why not? Should the government do anything to promote retirement villages to its citizens? Why or why not, and how? These aspects should be discussed in the discussion section. Your survey data are reported rather comprehensively in the findings section; however, the discussion section should be elaborated a little more.

Also, you should have three central research questions, not two.)

Content (35%)	Organization (35%)	Mechanics & Spelling (30%)	Total Score
25	30	23	78

(Your works cited are appropriate.)

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Appendix: Online Survey

Topic: **Taipei City Retiree-to-be's Opinion on Retirement Villages**

Online Survey: Snowball sampling

Central question #1: What are participants' retirement plans?

Central question #2: According to their plan, do the participants want to move in to a retirement village?

(a): Why would they consider living in a retirement village?

(b): Why wouldn't they consider living in a retirement village?

1. Part One. Basic Information

A. Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
B. Age Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 45 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 65-75 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 75
C. Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married (With Children) <input type="checkbox"/> Married (Without Children) <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
D. Highest Academic Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary education <input type="checkbox"/> Junior middle school education <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree <input type="checkbox"/> College diploma/graduate <input type="checkbox"/> University diploma /Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master degree <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor degree
E. Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology/Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Sales <input type="checkbox"/> Finance/Accounting/Banking <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing/Operations/Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Admin./HR/Support Services <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Management <input type="checkbox"/> Logis./Trading/Merchand./Purch <input type="checkbox"/> Writer/Editor/Creative Artist/Designer <input type="checkbox"/> Research Specialist Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Professor/Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine / Nursing <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Official <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Construction/Real Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Translator <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker <input type="checkbox"/> Soldier <input type="checkbox"/> Others_____
F. Ancestral Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Taiwanese <input type="checkbox"/> Hakka <input type="checkbox"/> Hokkien <input type="checkbox"/> China citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____
G. Annual income	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 300,000 NTD <input type="checkbox"/> 300,000-500,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 500,000-1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000,000-2,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 2,000,000

2. Part Two. Retirement Plan

1. Have you ever heard of “retirement village”?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Do you have a retirement plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. When do you wish to retire from work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Before 45 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 55-65 <input type="checkbox"/> after 65
4. Which following living style do you prefer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Live with family <input type="checkbox"/> Live near family <input type="checkbox"/> Live in a Retire Village <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> No plans yet
5. Do you have any retirement pay pension?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. How much are you willing to withdraw from your pension monthly?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 3,000 NTD <input type="checkbox"/> 3,000-5,000 NTD <input type="checkbox"/> 5,000-10,000 NTD <input type="checkbox"/> 10,000- 20,000NTD <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20,000 NTD

3. Part Three. Retirement Village Facility

<p>1. What features are you looking for in a retirement village?(Please tick all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 bedroom <input type="checkbox"/> 2 bedrooms <input type="checkbox"/> 3 bedrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> 1 bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> 2 bathrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Terraced <input type="checkbox"/> Garage <input type="checkbox"/> Free standing house</p>
<p>8. What communal facilities would you ideally like to see in a retirement village? (Please tick all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Function room (meetings and social activities) <input type="checkbox"/>Cinema <input type="checkbox"/>Café <input type="checkbox"/>Library <input type="checkbox"/>Gymnasium <input type="checkbox"/>Arts & Crafts room <input type="checkbox"/>Hobby/Workshop <input type="checkbox"/>Hairdressing/Beauty Salon <input type="checkbox"/>Doctor/Therapist consulting room <input type="checkbox"/>Swimming pool <input type="checkbox"/>Other (please specify)_____</p>

9. What services would you like to have in a retirement village? (Please tick all that apply)

- On-site Village Manager
- Emergency call button system
- Village bus
- Handyman
- Home cleaning
- Visiting hairdresser
- Visiting Doctor/Therapists
- Organized activities and outings
- Meals
- Other (please specify)_____

10. How much do you think it's the acceptable monthly fee for a retiree village?

- Lower than 10,000
- 10,000 -20,000
- 20,000-30,000
- More than 30,000

11. What are the critical reasons that makes you decide not to live in a retiree village?

- It is not necessary to move in a retiree village
- Far away from the family
- Want to stay in the original house
- Feeling abandoned by the family
- The payments of the village are unaffordable
- The location is far from downtown
- Other (please specify)_____

